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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for 5 minutes.

CONGRESSIONAL REFORM OF INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the importance of our national intelligence capability and what we in Congress must do to improve it.

Just a few weeks ago, the Commission on Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, the Robb-Silverman Commission, issued its report. One of the many charges leveled by the commission against the intelligence community, perhaps the most damning, is the intelligence community collects far too little information on many of the issues we care about most.

As the commission also points out, without information, analysis turns to guesswork. The state of the affairs in our intelligence community is alarming, dangerous and frankly unacceptable.

Within the span of 2 years, the United States has had two very obvious and public examples of intelligence failures. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and the dead wrong con-

clusions reached about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs.

The 9/11 Commission took the first step in identifying what ails the intelligence community, by pointing out that it's a community in name only. It needs centralized direction and coordination. The intelligence reform bill Congress enacted last year establishes a director of national intelligence and tries to address this problem.

I also believe that Congress did not challenge the intelligence community aggressively enough before we invaded Iraq, either in the issue of weapons of mass destruction, or the likely aftermath of the invasion. We, in Congress must help the intelligence community move beyond the cold war mentality and focus more effectively on the challenges we face from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and from al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups within global reach.

But, beyond fixing the intelligence community, Congress needs to get its own house in order. We must do a better job of oversight of the intelligence community. Restoring effective and constructive Congressional oversight should be a top bipartisan priority in the 109th Congress. I believe there will be value in putting together a bicameral, bipartisan select committee like the Joint Economic Committee or the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of the past, to take a hard look at how Congress should reform itself to better perform oversight of our intelligence.

In my view, the House and the Senate need similar structures to handle intelligence matters, so that the budget requests, legislative referrals and conferences between the two bodies on authorizations and appropriations are handled logically and simply and without disconnection or disfunction.

How would such a select committee work? Membership could be appointed by the leadership on both sides from

committees that deal with intelligence matters now. The committee could garner input from various groups including the intelligence community, other governmental organizations such as CRO, CBO and GAO, and from outside groups such as think tanks, former Members of Congress, and experts in the field.

Moreover, both the 9/11 Commission and the Robb-Silverman Commission made suggestions about how Congress should reform itself to do a better job with intelligence issues. These recommendations should be explored in depth. There are a number of fundamental questions that should be rethought: Which committee should have jurisdiction and oversight responsibilities for intelligence matters? Should there be a separate intelligence appropriations subcommittee? Should intelligence responsibility in Congress continue to be divided along programmatic lines, the JMIP, the TIARA, and the NIP? Should the current Select Committee on Intelligence be made permanent?

Mr. Speaker, these are not partisan questions, and they should not be addressed in a partisan fashion. I believe that for the sake of our own national security we must avoid a partisan blame game. We should focus on how to fix the intelligence community that is still reeling from its public failures and struggling to digest organizational reforms that we have already enacted.

At the same time, Congress must restore its own effective and constructive oversight over intelligence matters. I think a bicameral, bipartisan select committee could rise above the partisan and turf tensions that exist, and I urge Leader PELOSI and Speaker HASTERT to strongly consider this option as a way to improve the system.

In the final analysis, the intelligence community, the administration and the Congress must work all together to

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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ensure that we can meet the intelligence challenges we face in the coming years. We must get this right.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF RAFAEL DIAZ-BALART

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of sadness that I rise today to report to our colleagues of the passing of the father of our two very distinguished colleagues, the gentlemen from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) and (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART).

Rafael Diaz-Balart passed away last Friday after a brief illness of about 3 weeks. And he was one of the most incredible men I ever had the privilege of knowing.

I will say that, as we all know, the Diaz-Balart family has long been great champions of the cause of freedom and democracy in Cuba. And the greatest champion was the father, Rafael Diaz-Balart.

He had a very, very distinguished and varied career. He served as the majority leader in the Cuban House of Representatives, during the time of the Cuban Republic. Later, from exile, he founded the White Rose Party to fight the communist dictatorship.

He served 14 years as a Costa Rican diplomat, and was a legal advisor to the Spanish Government. He always continued to do everything that he possibly could to encourage the cause of democracy and freedom in his homeland.

He is an individual who was extraordinarily dedicated to his family. He had four wonderful sons. And I had the chance to talk to our two colleagues just last Friday shortly after he passed away. And I was struck with some of the things that were said.

As I said, it was a brief illness. And the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) told me that his father said to the doctors, whom he had just met, he said, "It was worth getting sick just to have the chance to meet you wonderful guys."

And the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) said to me that our father taught us how to live, and now he has taught us how to die. And I will say that for me personally it will be a great loss, because I had the opportunity to spend many wonderful times with Rafael Diaz-Balart, and I know that we all, as we think of his passing and the wonderful life that he led, will redouble our efforts to ensure that his dream of freedom and democracy finally come about for the Cuban people.

RECOGNIZING THE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Janu-

ary 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, on May 8, 2005, we will mark the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. So I rise today to honor the men and women that did their duty in this war to comfort the families that lost loved ones.

World War II was truly a world war conflict, spread across the globe, and it is estimated that some 50 million people died as a result. The impact of the war was felt everywhere. Men and woman from every walk of life were encouraged to do their bit for the war effort, and they responded magnificently.

It is hard to imagine the relief and joy that those who had lived through the war experienced when at last the war finally ended. Veterans remember ripping the blackout curtains from their windows, turning on their lights, and sharing with their family, friends and neighbors or complete strangers their joy at hearing the news that the war was over.

However, we should remember that for many, the end of the war came over a period of months. For those who were serving in the Far East and their loved ones, the war continued long after the victory celebrations that are etched in our popular memory. World War II extracted a terrible toll, most brutally in terms of the dreadful human cost in dead, injured and of course disabled.

Year after year of sacrifice and uncertainty, of making do and going without, left its mark on each and every Nation. But it also helped forge an attitude of never again.

The images we see of people celebrating the end of the war are people shaking off their recent past and looking forward to a better peaceful future. As we look back on these images, we might stop to reflect upon not only the debt that we owe them, but to consider too the responsibility for the future that we have inherited.

As we look towards the future we look towards democracy. President Bush's trip to Europe, in particular the Soviet Union, exemplified his strong push towards his foreign policy agenda of spreading democracy. As we look towards the future today, President Bush also looked towards the past in remembrance of World War II.

He connected the struggles against Nazi and Communist tyranny in the part of the world to his own campaign to bring democracy to the Middle East. In an effort to encourage President Putin to acknowledge past national mistakes he said, "In regard to our occupation of the Middle East, we will not repeat the mistakes of other generations, appeasing or excusing tyranny, and sacrificing freedom in the vain pursuit of stability. We have learned our lesson. No one's life is expendable. In the long run our security and our true stability depends upon the freedom of others."

It is a remarkable statement that the President issued. It is this freedom, the

freedom and benefits of a democratic Nation that President Bush is trying to encourage people to reflect on. His scheduled stop in Latvia was a way of easing his participation into Monday's anniversary celebration in Moscow's Red Square.

But, of course, a trip like this reopened old wounds between Moscow and the Baltic States, which of course were absorbed into the Soviet Union in 1940 after the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop deal between Hitler and Joseph Stalin in 1939.

The agreement provided for Soviet occupation of Estonia, Latvia, part of Finland and later Lithuania in return for Nazi Germany's control over most of Poland. As President Bush looked back on the history of the Soviet Union, he tried to compare the United States' past mistakes to that of the Soviet Union.

President Bush noted that lengthy and difficult journey for us here in the United States for democracy, with our own civil war that we struggled through. As we look to the future, it is essential to remember the past and the mistakes we made as a Nation, and other Nations should do the same.

World War II embodies what certain mistakes can result in. Sixty years ago, millions of Europeans were suffering from homelessness or having been released from captivity or expelled as part of an act of vengeance.

So thousands of Americans and American families were left with a gaping hole, as they had lost loved ones in the battles during World War II. It is today that we make a stand and seek to liberalize other nations and encourage freedom and democracy throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to praise President Bush for his statements that were made in Europe this week and again honor the lives of millions of soldiers that fought for the end of the war, World War II.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KOLBE) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Eternal Father of our freedom and our salvation, hear the prayers of Your people across this Nation. With them we pray as one for the Members of Congress who gather today to attend the